

Montana Film Office

Getting Hired in the Production Industry with No Experience

The Montana Film Office offers the following suggestions to persons that have no production experience but wish to work in the production industry (AND stay in Montana).

- Establish contacts and network!
- Call the Film Office (406/841-2876) and request a copy of the Montana crew list. This will be helpful in letting you know who works in the film industry in your area. If you recognize a name on the crew list, it might not be a bad idea to call and ask questions about their job and the industry in general. It might be possible to volunteer your time to help them get ready for their next project (run errands, shop for props, etc.) You never know—they might become a great contact and could lead to your first production assistant position. You might even know someone on the crew list that you didn't know worked in the industry.
- Contact the film school at MSU Bozeman (406/994-6224—Media & Theatre Arts). Film students are always looking for willing and able crew members to work on their projects. Though there is no pay, it's a good place to get a crash course in filmmaking. And if you are a student—particularly at MSU—work on as many projects as you can!!! The experiences will prove invaluable when you are on an actual set. Besides, you don't know where some of those students will end up. The contacts you made with them while film students might lead to some great jobs in the future.
- Internships are always a good idea, but they aren't as readily available in Montana as they are in major production areas. However, internships with professors, local TV stations, or local production companies can certainly lead to a career in the industry. Working for free, or school credit, will provide you with the kind of information that is not available in the classroom.
- If you are a student, challenge yourself to produce quality work, which you can enter in film festivals. This is great exposure and can lead to more (paying!) work.
- Persistence is essential. You want to get on a film, get to know the people in the production office. If you happen to be “at the right place, at the right time” you might get a job.
- Charm is also essential, but do not continually annoy the production office with your requests for a job. Be charming and persistent... that takes a lot of work!
- If a production does come to town, volunteer to work for free since you do not have any experience. When a position comes open (and they always do) they will be more likely to hire the hardworking ‘volunteer’ with whom they've already established a working relationship.
- READ, READ, READ!!! Get your hands on every bit of information about the industry that you can—so when you do get your first break, you'll know the lingo and it will seem as though you've already worked in production before.

Book suggestions include *Breaking & Entering: Land Your First Job in Film Production* available from Hollywood Creative Directory/IFILMpro or from amazon.com; *Production Assistant Guidelines* available from Sandy Curry; and *Breaking Into Film: Making Your Career Search a Blockbuster* available from Peterson's. Also, check out the web site www.amazon.com for more film industry books.

Resources with film industry information:

**Hollywood Creative
Directory/IFILMpro**
1024 N. Orange Dr.
Hollywood, CA 90038
800-815-0503 or 323-308-3490
<http://www.hcdonline.com>

Sandy Curry
Production Assistant Guidelines
217 N. Henry St.
Brooklyn, NY 11222
718/389-6610
<http://www.paguidelines.com>

Peterson's
202 Carnegie Center
Princeton, NJ 08540
609/243-9111
<http://www.petersons.com>

- Learn basic skills—how to: answer phones, use a computer, type, make coffee, drive a stick shift, etc. This will ensure that once you have a job, you'll keep the people that hired you happy.
- After you've worked on a production: Congratulations—you now have experience! Contact the Film Office to ask about getting on the Montana crew list. As a section of the Montana Production Guide, the crew list will make your name available to production companies looking to hire local crew. The Montana crew list is also included on the Film Office website (<http://www.montanafilm.com>), giving you more exposure to the film industry. There is no charge to be on the crew list.
- The Montana Film Office hotline lists current projects that need crew. Unfortunately, it isn't always as informative as we would like since information can only be included on our hotline after a production company gives permission. Often production companies are reluctant to release information about their project during its early phase. The hotline phone number is 406/444-3960. This same information is also available on the Film Office website in the "News 4 Crews" section.

How to contact us

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